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## Developing a Talent Management Capability Model for Enhancing Organizational Agility: A Grounded Theory Study in a Municipal Organization

### ABSTRACT

As a fundamental institution, the Iranian educational system requires fundamental transformations his study aimed to develop a model of talent management capabilities for enhancing organizational agility in a municipality. The study employed a qualitative approach based on grounded theory. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 11 managers, deputy managers, and experts with experience and expertise in human resource management and municipal planning. Participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling, and data collection continued until theoretical saturation was reached. The data were analyzed manually through open, axial, and selective coding. Continuous review, research process auditing, test-retest coding, and expert evaluation were used to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. The findings revealed that the proposed model of talent management capabilities for enhancing organizational agility in the municipality comprises causal conditions, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, strategies, and outcomes. The model's principal components include a positive organizational structure, effective communication, participative management, a merit-based human resource management system, a positive organizational climate, collaborative learning, ineffective management, political pressure, the recruitment and deployment of competent personnel, employee training, and the localized adaptation of successful practices. The study concludes that transforming talent management into a strategic and dynamic capability can improve organizational performance, build trust, enhance responsiveness, and strengthen organizational agility within the municipality.

**Keywords:** Grounded Theory; Municipality; Organizational Agility; Paradigm Model; Talent Management; Talent Management Capabilities

### Introduction

Organizations currently operate in environments characterized by accelerating technological change, increasing stakeholder expectations, institutional complexity, workforce mobility, and persistent uncertainty. Under such conditions, organizational effectiveness increasingly depends not only on access to financial, technological, and physical resources but also on the capacity to mobilize human resources rapidly and appropriately in response to emerging demands. This requirement has elevated organizational agility from an operational concern to a strategic organizational capability. Organizational agility refers broadly to an organization's capacity to sense changes in its environment, recognize emerging opportunities and threats, respond rapidly, and reconfigure organizational resources and processes in ways that preserve effectiveness under changing conditions. Within this perspective, agility is closely associated with flexibility, responsiveness, learning, innovation, and the capability to adjust organizational arrangements before environmental changes undermine

performance. The growing significance of digital transformation has further intensified this requirement because digitalization affects organizational structures, workflows, employee competencies, decision-making systems, and the nature of service delivery simultaneously. Evidence from organizational digitalization initiatives indicates that successful adaptation to technological transformation requires changes extending beyond technology itself to encompass organizational capabilities, work practices, leadership, and human resources [1]. Consequently, the development and strategic deployment of human talent have become increasingly important mechanisms through which organizations can build the adaptive capacity required for sustained agility.

Talent management has emerged within strategic human resource management as an integrated approach to ensuring that organizations have access to employees with the capabilities required for present and future organizational priorities. Although definitions vary across organizational settings, contemporary talent management generally encompasses the identification, attraction, recruitment, development, deployment, engagement, retention, and succession of individuals whose competencies or potential are strategically important. Recent scholarship shows that talent management is no longer appropriately conceptualized as a narrow collection of human resource practices; instead, it constitutes a strategic system through which organizations align human capabilities with changing strategic requirements. A comprehensive review by Akbar et al. indicates that talent management research increasingly emphasizes the integration of talent identification, development, retention, strategic workforce planning, and organizational outcomes, while also highlighting the need for further research capable of explaining how talent systems function in complex and dynamic organizational contexts [2]. Similarly, the relationship between talent management and organizational learning suggests that effective talent systems must create continuous opportunities for employees to acquire, exchange, and apply knowledge rather than merely classify individuals according to their current performance or potential [3].

This strategic perspective becomes particularly important when organizations are confronted with rapidly changing skill requirements. Traditional staffing systems generally assume that jobs, competencies, and organizational structures remain sufficiently stable for organizations to identify positions first and subsequently assign people to them. Contemporary environments challenge this assumption. Skills can become obsolete, organizational priorities can change quickly, and employees may need to move across functions, projects, and roles. A skills-matching perspective therefore proposes that talent management should continuously identify organizational capability requirements and dynamically connect individuals' skills to those requirements. Jooss et al. argue that effective skills matching can strengthen strategic agility because it provides organizations with greater flexibility in reallocating talent and deploying capabilities wherever emerging organizational priorities require them [4]. Further development of this perspective emphasizes that talent management contributes to strategic agility when organizations possess sufficient visibility regarding workforce skills and can dynamically match available competencies with changing strategic demands [5]. Thus, talent management becomes a mechanism of organizational reconfiguration rather than merely a means of filling predetermined positions.

A related body of scholarship has conceptualized talent management through the lens of dynamic capabilities. In turbulent environments, organizations must repeatedly identify new human capital requirements, develop employees, reorganize workforce configurations, and modify talent-related practices. From this perspective, talent management capabilities represent an organization's capacity to create, combine, deploy, and reconfigure human resources in response to environmental change. Harsch and Festing's qualitative exploration showed that dynamic talent management capabilities

can provide an important foundation for organizational agility by enabling organizations to adapt their human capital configurations as environmental and strategic demands evolve [6]. Their subsequent formulation further demonstrated that talent management systems become strategically valuable when they are sufficiently dynamic to support continuous organizational adaptation rather than functioning as static administrative arrangements [7]. This approach is particularly relevant to organizations operating within complex administrative systems because agility requires an interaction between competent employees and organizational mechanisms capable of deploying those employees flexibly.

Learning agility constitutes another important link between talent management and organizational responsiveness. Employees who can learn from unfamiliar experiences, revise established assumptions, acquire new capabilities, and transfer learning to new problems provide organizations with greater adaptive capacity. A systematic review by Milani et al. demonstrated that learning agility has become increasingly relevant to talent identification and development because high-potential employees must be capable not only of performing effectively under current conditions but also of adapting their competencies to future and uncertain requirements [8]. Accordingly, talent management systems intended to enhance organizational agility should incorporate developmental mechanisms that strengthen employees' learning capacity, adaptability, and readiness to assume unfamiliar responsibilities. This implies a shift from viewing talent as a fixed characteristic toward understanding it as a capacity that can be cultivated, mobilized, and reconfigured according to organizational requirements.

The relationship between talent and agility is also visible in the concept of talent agility. Industry 4.0, digital transformation, automation, and new business models have increased pressure on organizations to maintain employees whose capabilities can evolve alongside technological and strategic changes. Research on barriers to talent agility in the automobile industry demonstrates that organizations may experience significant difficulties when talent structures, skill-development processes, leadership practices, or organizational arrangements fail to keep pace with technological transformation [9]. These findings reinforce the argument that talent itself does not automatically generate agility. Rather, organizational systems must enable competent individuals to move, learn, collaborate, make decisions, and respond to emerging conditions. Consequently, examining the capabilities underlying talent management may provide a more comprehensive explanation of organizational agility than examining isolated practices such as recruitment, training, or retention.

Talent management must likewise be aligned with broader organizational ecosystems. Strategic talent management and agile management are increasingly understood as interdependent systems because organizational competitiveness requires coordination among human capital practices, managerial structures, organizational learning, innovation, and responsiveness. Rožman et al. found that the development of strategic talent management alongside agile management ecosystems can strengthen organizational competitiveness by enabling organizations to respond more effectively to dynamic environmental requirements [10]. This ecosystem perspective suggests that talent management should not be confined to the human resources department. Its effectiveness depends on organizational structure, leadership behavior, communication, learning opportunities, employee participation, and the institutional environment within which talent-related decisions are made. In other words, the contribution of talent management to agility emerges through interactions among organizational conditions rather than through isolated human resource interventions.

Earlier research within the Iranian context has similarly connected talent management with human resource agility. Sohrabi et al. proposed a talent management framework emphasizing a human resource agility approach and highlighted the importance of aligning talent identification and development with organizational flexibility and responsiveness [11]. This perspective is particularly important because institutional and cultural contexts shape the implementation of talent management. Talent practices that operate effectively in one organization or national context cannot necessarily be transferred directly into another without considering organizational structures, employment systems, managerial traditions, regulations, and patterns of authority. Therefore, localized models are required to identify how talent management capabilities are generated and translated into organizational agility within specific organizational environments.

Recent literature has also strengthened the connection between talent management and competitive advantage. Talent management practices may contribute to sustainable competitive advantage by creating organizational capabilities that are valuable, difficult to imitate, and embedded within organizational routines. Attar et al. demonstrated that talent management practices can support sustainable competitive advantage within private-sector organizations, reinforcing the strategic significance of developing and retaining appropriate human capabilities [12]. Similarly, Al-Kharabsheh found that talent management is associated with competitive advantage and that this relationship is influenced by organizational ambidexterity, emphasizing that organizations need the simultaneous capacity to exploit established capabilities while exploring emerging opportunities [13]. These findings are highly relevant to organizational agility because agile organizations must preserve operational continuity while simultaneously adapting to changing circumstances. Talent management can support this dual requirement by maintaining essential expertise while developing capabilities appropriate for future conditions.

At the same time, talent management cannot be treated as a universally standardized phenomenon. Organizational actors may define talent differently, prioritize different employee groups, and implement substantially different talent practices depending on institutional objectives and contextual constraints. Research conducted in Jordan demonstrates the multiple organizational interpretations and manifestations of talent and talent management, indicating that organizational understandings of talent are shaped by contextual and managerial perspectives [14]. This contextual variability highlights an important theoretical and practical issue: a model of talent management intended for a specific organization must emerge from the realities of that organization rather than being imposed solely through assumptions generated in other institutional settings. Such contextual sensitivity is especially important in public organizations, where talent-related decisions may be affected by formal regulations, public accountability, administrative hierarchies, political influences, and obligations toward multiple stakeholder groups.

Succession planning is another critical dimension of a talent management capability system. Organizations become vulnerable when strategically important knowledge, leadership competence, and institutional memory are concentrated in a small number of individuals without mechanisms for identifying and preparing potential successors. Musale emphasizes that succession planning contributes to talent retention and the development of future organizational leaders by providing systematic pathways for leadership continuity [15]. Within the Iranian literature, Ahi et al. likewise proposed a talent management model emphasizing succession development and demonstrated the importance of systematically connecting talent management with organizational continuity and future leadership requirements [16]. Succession capability is particularly relevant to organizational agility because rapid environmental response depends partly on the availability of

qualified personnel capable of assuming critical responsibilities when organizational needs change. The absence of systematic succession planning may therefore constrain agility even where talented employees are present.

The importance of governance conditions further differentiates talent management in public organizations from its application in many private-sector settings. Public organizations must pursue effectiveness while operating under requirements related to legality, accountability, transparency, equity, institutional legitimacy, and public interest. Strategic human talent management in public institutions consequently faces challenges that extend beyond employee productivity and competitive advantage. A systematic review by Quispe Torres and Contreras Rivera identified substantial challenges surrounding strategic human talent management in public organizations and emphasized the need for approaches responsive to institutional structures and contemporary demands [17]. More specifically, Sakvand et al. developed a good-governance-driven talent management model in which contextual, strategic, and intervening factors contribute to organizational efficiency, illustrating how governance arrangements can either support or constrain the effectiveness of talent management systems [18]. Such evidence suggests that understanding talent management capability in a public organization requires attention to managerial, administrative, structural, contextual, and potentially political conditions simultaneously.

These issues assume particular importance in municipal organizations. Municipalities operate at the intersection of public administration, urban management, infrastructure provision, social expectations, environmental change, and direct citizen service. They must respond to changing urban demands while navigating administrative procedures, resource constraints, multiple stakeholders, and institutional pressures. Tehran Municipality represents a particularly complex setting because of its broad responsibilities, organizational scale, diverse workforce, and requirement for rapid and effective responses to changing metropolitan needs. The manuscript identifies organizational agility as an essential concern within this setting and positions talent management as a strategic mechanism for identifying, developing, and deploying personnel capable of strengthening responsiveness and organizational readiness. Consequently, the effectiveness of talent management in such an environment is likely to depend on more than conventional practices of recruitment or training; it requires organizational capabilities through which talent-related resources can be continuously aligned with institutional demands.

Despite increasing scholarly interest, several gaps remain. Much existing research has investigated individual talent management practices, general relationships between talent management and organizational outcomes, or the contribution of talent management to agility and competitive advantage. Comparatively less attention has been given to the processes through which multiple organizational conditions interact to create talent management capabilities specifically oriented toward organizational agility. This limitation is particularly evident in public organizations, where bureaucratic structures, governance requirements, institutional pressures, stakeholder diversity, and political influences may fundamentally alter how talent systems are designed and implemented. Moreover, recent scholarship continues to call for contextually grounded explanations of talent management rather than assuming the universal applicability of models developed in private-sector or different national environments. The emerging literature on learning agility, skills matching, dynamic talent management capabilities, succession development, organizational ambidexterity, good governance, and agile management ecosystems collectively indicates that talent management should be examined as a multidimensional organizational capability rather than as a collection of independent human resource functions [5, 8, 10, 13, 18].

Accordingly, a context-sensitive investigation is required to explain which conditions give rise to agility-oriented talent management capabilities, how these capabilities are manifested within the organization, which contextual and intervening

conditions affect their implementation, what strategies can strengthen them, and what organizational outcomes may result. A grounded theory approach is especially appropriate for this purpose because it allows the relationships among these elements to emerge from the experiences and perceptions of organizational actors rather than restricting the investigation to predetermined variables. The current study therefore addresses both a theoretical need to conceptualize talent management as a dynamic and context-dependent capability and a practical need to provide public-sector decision makers with an empirically grounded framework for developing human resources capable of supporting rapid, flexible, and sustainable organizational responses.

Therefore, the aim of this study was to develop a grounded theory model of talent management capabilities for enhancing organizational agility in Tehran Municipality.

## Methodology

The present study was conducted with the aim of designing a model of talent management capabilities to enhance organizational agility in the Municipality of Tehran, using a qualitative approach based on grounded theory. Grounded theory was selected because it enables the identification, explanation, and formulation of relationships among concepts and categories the systematic analysis and constant comparison perspectives. In grounded theory, a theory or conceptual model is developed through the systematic analysis and constant comparison of empirical data rather than through the predetermined imposition of theoretical frameworks (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Accordingly, this approach was considered appropriate for identifying the dimensions, components, conditions, strategies, and consequences of talent management capabilities in relation to organizational agility.

The participants included managers, deputies, and experts with relevant experience and specialized knowledge in human resources, planning, and management within the Municipality of Tehran. Participants were selected based on criteria such as having at least 15 years of work experience in the Municipality of Tehran, possessing managerial experience in human resources and planning, holding a relevant degree in management or urban planning, being familiar with talent management processes, and having the ability to provide expert perspectives on organizational agility. In total, 11 qualified experts participated in the study.

Purposive sampling was initially employed, meaning that individuals were selected who could provide rich, relevant, and in-depth data concerning the phenomenon under investigation. Subsequently, snowball sampling was also used to identify individuals with complementary experiences and to broaden the range of information obtained. Participant selection and data collection continued until theoretical saturation was achieved. Theoretical saturation was considered to have been reached when data obtained from new interviews did not contribute any new concepts, codes, or categories to the developing model. Although signs of data repetition began to emerge after the ninth interview, interviews the through the eleventh participant to ensure data adequacy and the stabilization of the extracted categories. Continuing the sampling process until theoretical saturation is consistent with the logic of qualitative research and grounded theory (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to use predetermined topics while also posing follow-up and exploratory questions based on the responses and experiences of each participant, thereby facilitating a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

At the beginning of each interview, the purpose of the study, the manner in which the information would be used, and the confidentiality of the data were explained to the participants. Subsequently, open-ended questions were asked about the status of talent management, the required capabilities and components, influential factors, barriers, organizational conditions, strategies for enhancing agility, and expected outcomes. Additional questions were posed based on the participants' responses in order to clarify, deepen, and complete the collected data. The interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. After obtaining the participants' consent, the interviews were recorded, transcribed, and prepared for analysis. In cases where permission to record the interview was not granted, the information was documented through detailed note-taking.

Data analysis was conducted concurrently with the data collection process and followed the stages of open, axial, and selective coding. During open coding, the interview transcripts were examined line by line and statement by statement. Meaningful concepts, experiences, perspectives, and relevant statements were identified and transformed into initial codes. At this stage, constant comparisons were made among the data, codes, and interviews to identify similarities, differences, and potential relationships among the concepts. Constant comparison is a fundamental element of grounded theory that contributes to the gradual refinement of concepts and the development of greater coherence among categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

During axial coding, initial codes with semantic similarities were organized into categories and subcategories, and the relationships among them were examined. At this stage, the categories were organized according to causal conditions, the central phenomenon, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, strategies, and consequences. During selective coding, the major and minor categories were integrated, the core category was identified, and the final relationships among the components of the model were examined. The outcome of this process was the development of a conceptual model of talent management capabilities for enhancing organizational agility. Data analysis was conducted manually throughout the research process.

Several strategies were employed to enhance the credibility and dependability of the findings. First, data analysis was conducted continuously and concurrently with data collection so that emerging concepts and categories could be systematically reviewed, revised, and elaborated. Second, the research process, the correspondence between the data and codes, the development of categories, and the final interpretations were examined through an audit process. Research auditing contributes to the transparency of the analytical process and the traceability of the researcher's decisions and is considered an important strategy for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In addition, a test–retest procedure was used to assess coding stability. For this purpose, a portion of the interviews was coded on two occasions with a 10-day interval between the coding sessions. The agreement coefficient obtained from the test–retest coding procedure was 79%, indicating an acceptable level of stability and reliability in the coding process. Moreover, the categories, the relationships among them, and the final model were reviewed by university professors and individuals knowledgeable in management and human resources. This process was undertaken to strengthen the conceptual coherence, appropriateness of the categories, and dependability of the findings. The use of strategies such as continuous review, assessment of coding stability, and expert examination is consistent with the criteria of credibility and dependability in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Ethical principles were observed throughout the research process. Participation in the interviews was voluntary, and before each interview, the purpose of the study and the manner in which the data would be used were explained to the participants. Audio recording was conducted only with their consent. The confidentiality of the information and the anonymity of the participants were maintained throughout all stages of the study. The data were used solely for academic research purposes, and the findings were reported in aggregate form without directly attributing statements to specific individuals.

## Findings and Results

The qualitative data were analyzed through the three stages of open, axial, and selective coding within a grounded theory approach. In the first stage, initial concepts and codes were extracted from the semi-structured interview transcripts, and similar and overlapping concepts were classified into subcategories. During axial coding, the conceptual relationships among the categories were examined, and the dimensions of the model were organized according to the six components of the paradigmatic model: causal conditions, the core phenomenon, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, strategies, and consequences. Finally, during selective coding, the identified categories were integrated, resulting in the development of the final talent management capability model for enhancing organizational agility in Tehran Municipality.

Causal conditions constitute the first component of the paradigmatic model. They refer to the underlying circumstances and driving factors that contribute to the emergence of the core phenomenon and guide the organization toward establishing agility-based talent management capabilities. These conditions were organized into six categories: positive organizational structure, effective communication, participative management, behavioral characteristics, the human resource management system, and sound administrative processes. A positive organizational structure emphasizes decentralized organizational control and supervision and the existence of appropriate mechanisms for information exchange. Effective communication encompasses facilitated access to information and organizational transparency. Participative management provides a foundation for talent development by developing human capital and strengthening interpersonal skills and relationships. Behavioral characteristics emphasize attention to employees' personality traits and cognitive factors. The human resource management system is based on flexibility in the deployment of organizational personnel and the institutionalization of meritocracy. Sound administrative processes emphasize clarifying regulations and rules and employing technology-based practices. Table 1 presents the categories and indicators of the causal conditions underlying the development of agility-based talent management capabilities.

**Table 1**

*Categories and Indicators of the Causal Conditions Underlying the Development of Agility-Based Talent Management Capabilities*

| Main Category     | Subcategory                       | Extracted Indicators                                                                                   |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Causal conditions | Positive organizational structure | Decentralized organizational control and supervision; existence of mechanisms for information exchange |
|                   | Effective communication           | Facilitated access to information; organizational transparency                                         |
|                   | Participative management          | Human capital development; development of interpersonal skills and relationships                       |
|                   | Behavioral characteristics        | Attention to employees' personality traits; understanding employees' cognitive factors                 |
|                   | Human resource management system  | Flexibility in the deployment of organizational personnel; meritocracy                                 |
|                   | Sound administrative processes    | Clarification of regulations and rules; emphasis on technology-based practices                         |

Table 1 shows that talent management capabilities are developed and strengthened within a multifaceted context comprising structural, managerial, human, and behavioral components. According to the data presented in this table, enhancing organizational agility through talent management is not possible without reforming traditional administrative procedures and moving toward decentralized, flexible, and transparent structures. The existence of appropriate mechanisms for information exchange and employees' access to organizational information provides the foundation for rapid decision-making and effective responses to environmental changes. Furthermore, the convergence of meritocracy in the human resource management system, employee participation, and recognition of employees' personality-related and cognitive capacities constitutes an essential prerequisite for developing agility capabilities in Tehran Municipality. These findings indicate that structural factors and human infrastructure have complementary and mutually reinforcing relationships, and weakness in either may disrupt the development of talent management capabilities.

The core phenomenon of the study is agility-based talent management capabilities. This phenomenon extends beyond a set of separate functional activities within human resource management and operates throughout the organizational structure as a dynamic, value-oriented, and multilevel capacity. Possessing these capabilities enables Tehran Municipality to respond rapidly, flexibly, adaptively, and on the basis of merit when confronting environmental changes, fluctuations, and demands. The core phenomenon was conceptualized at four levels: individual, group, organizational, and social. The individual level encompasses respect, hopefulness, responsibility, achievement, and sportsmanship. The group level focuses on team effectiveness. The organizational level comprises social capital, psychological capital, organizational virtues, and work conscience. The social level includes social participation and altruism. Table 2 presents the dimensions and components of the study's core phenomenon.

**Table 2**

*Dimensions and Components of the Core Phenomenon*

| Dimension of the Core Phenomenon | Extracted Components                                                           |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Individual level                 | Respect; hopefulness; responsibility; achievement; sportsmanship               |
| Group level                      | Team effectiveness                                                             |
| Organizational level             | Social capital; psychological capital; organizational virtues; work conscience |
| Social level                     | Social participation; altruism                                                 |

Table 2 shows that agility-based talent management capabilities are systemic, multilevel, and holistic in nature. At the individual level, these capabilities begin with motivational, ethical, and behavioral components; however, their full realization requires individual capacities to be transformed into collaboration and group effectiveness. Subsequently, these capabilities must become institutionalized at the organizational level in the form of social and psychological capital, organizational virtues, and work conscience. The extension of talent management capabilities to the social level also indicates that, in a public and service-oriented organization such as Tehran Municipality, organizational agility is not limited merely to increasing the speed or flexibility of internal organizational processes. Rather, it should ultimately strengthen social participation, foster altruistic behaviors, and enhance the organization's capacity to provide services to citizens. Therefore, focusing solely on identifying and developing individual talents is insufficient to achieve agility; coherence and continuity must be established across the individual, group, organizational, and social levels.

Contextual conditions encompass the circumstances and characteristics of the internal organizational environment that facilitate and support the adoption and implementation of agility-based talent management strategies. In this study,

contextual conditions were identified in three categories: self-assessment, a positive organizational climate, and collaborative learning. Self-assessment emphasizes individuals' identification and evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses and their ability to choose among various organizational benefits and rewards. A positive organizational climate includes recognizing individuals' psychological capacities and fostering a positive mindset. Collaborative learning is developed through brainstorming and knowledge-sharing sessions and the joint planning of work-related tasks. Table 3 presents the categories and indicators of the contextual conditions.

**Table 3**

*Categories and Indicators of the Contextual Conditions*

| Main Category         | Subcategory                     | Extracted Indicators                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Contextual conditions | Self-assessment                 | Individuals' identification and evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses; the opportunity to choose among various organizational benefits and rewards |
|                       | Positive organizational climate | Recognition of individuals' psychological capacities; fostering a positive mindset                                                                        |
|                       | Collaborative learning          | Conducting brainstorming and knowledge-sharing sessions; joint planning of work-related tasks                                                             |

Table 3 shows that contextual conditions provide a facilitating environment for implementing agility-based talent management strategies. Self-assessment enables employees to identify their capabilities, developmental needs, strengths, and professional limitations more accurately and to assume greater responsibility for their career development. Furthermore, when the organizational environment is psychologically positive and supportive and provides opportunities for learning, experience sharing, and collective reflection, employees demonstrate greater readiness and motivation to realize their potential. Such an environment reduces resistance to change, increases acceptance of transformational initiatives, and promotes greater alignment between actual human resource needs and organizational strategies. Consequently, favorable contextual conditions can enhance the quality of the selection and implementation of talent management strategies and facilitate the achievement of organizational agility.

Intervening conditions comprise barriers, constraints, and inhibiting factors that may slow down, divert, or halt the selection and implementation of agility-based talent management strategies. Based on the data analysis, these conditions were classified into two categories: ineffective management and political pressure. Ineffective management arises from the absence of sound managerial planning, disregard for employees' views and suggestions, and the lack of a succession-planning system. Political pressure encompasses the dominance of political and group affiliations over human resource management mechanisms, negative publicity against the organization's services, and managerial conservatism. Table 4 presents the categories and indicators of the intervening conditions.

**Table 4**

*Categories and Indicators of the Intervening Conditions*

| Main Category          | Subcategory            | Extracted Indicators                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Intervening conditions | Ineffective management | Lack of sound managerial planning; disregard for employees' opinions and suggestions; absence of succession planning                                          |
|                        | Political pressure     | Dominance of political and group affiliations over human resource mechanisms; negative publicity against the organization's services; managerial conservatism |

Table 4 shows that managerial constraints and environmental pressures can undermine specialized, professional, and merit-based talent management mechanisms. The absence of coherent, long-term planning, insufficient attention to

employee participation, and a lack of succession planning hinder the identification, development, and retention of talented personnel. Moreover, the dominance of political and group affiliations over human resource decisions can weaken merit-based criteria and subject organizational appointments and personnel transfers to nonprofessional preferences. This situation can reduce the motivation of capable employees, weaken organizational trust, and diminish the municipality's ability to respond rapidly to urban changes and needs. Therefore, the success of talent management strategies requires mechanisms that mitigate the adverse effects of ineffective management, manage political pressures, and protect merit-based processes.

Strategies refer to action plans, executive measures, and intervention procedures adopted in response to the core phenomenon and in consideration of contextual and intervening conditions to develop talent management capabilities and enhance organizational agility. The findings identified three fundamental strategies. The first is benchmarking and localizing the structures and experiences of leading organizations in agility-based talent management. The second is recruiting, selecting, and deploying committed, skilled, and capable human resources. The third is training employees and promoting successful behavioral models among them. Table 5 presents the strategies for developing agility-based talent management.

**Table 5**

*Strategies for Developing Agility-Based Talent Management*

| Main Category | Extracted Strategies                                                                                                   |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Strategies    | Benchmarking and localizing the structures and experiences of leading organizations in agility-based talent management |
|               | Recruiting, selecting, and deploying committed, skilled, and capable human resources                                   |
|               | Training employees and promoting successful behavioral models among them                                               |

Table 5 shows that the identified strategies serve as the link between agility-based talent management capabilities and tangible organizational outcomes. Benchmarking leading organizations makes it possible to benefit from successful experiences; however, the effectiveness of this strategy requires the models to be adapted to the structure, missions, capacities, and limitations of Tehran Municipality. Recruiting and deploying committed, skilled, and capable personnel also enable the organization to secure the human capital required to meet the demands of agility. In addition, training and promoting successful behavioral models facilitate the transfer of desirable behaviors, the institutionalization of organizational values, and the continuity of agility capabilities. Therefore, the municipality's approach to talent management should shift from traditional, static, and bureaucratic practices toward a learning-oriented, dynamic, merit-based approach grounded in intelligent benchmarking.

Consequences represent the outputs and outcomes resulting from the successful implementation of agility-based talent management strategies. These consequences were categorized at two levels: behavioral and organizational. Behavioral consequences include strengthening ethical dignity and enhancing individual effectiveness and efficiency. Organizational consequences include improving organizational performance, increasing trust among employees, promoting a healthy-society perspective, and achieving sustainable development. Table 6 presents the dimensions and indicators of the consequences of the agility-based talent management model.

**Table 6**

*Dimensions and Indicators of the Consequences of the Agility-Based Talent Management Model*

| Main Category | Consequence Dimension | Extracted Indicators                                                             |
|---------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Consequences  | Behavioral            | Strengthening ethical dignity; enhancing individual effectiveness and efficiency |

| Main Category | Consequence Dimension | Extracted Indicators                                                                                                                     |
|---------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Consequences  | Organizational        | Improving organizational performance; increasing trust among employees; promoting a healthy-society perspective; sustainable development |

Table 6 shows that implementing agility-based talent management strategies generates interconnected consequences at the individual, organizational, and social levels. At the individual level, attention to employees' talents and competencies strengthens their status and ethical dignity and enhances their individual effectiveness and efficiency. At the organizational level, developing the capabilities of employees and workgroups improves performance, increases mutual trust, and strengthens organizational stability and sustainability. More broadly, the association of talent management with a healthy-society perspective and sustainable development indicates that the consequences of the model are not confined to organizational boundaries. Instead, they can improve the quality of urban services and enhance the municipality's capacity to respond to citizens' needs. Accordingly, agility-based talent management is an effective means of improving human resource and organizational performance and provides a foundation for achieving urban sustainable development goals.

During selective coding, all the identified categories and relationships were organized to develop a coherent and integrated framework. At this stage, the relationships among causal conditions, the core phenomenon, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, strategies, and consequences were established. The causal conditions lead to the emergence of the core phenomenon; the core phenomenon determines the overall orientation of the strategies; contextual and intervening conditions directly affect the selection, implementation, and effectiveness of the strategies; and implementation of the strategies leads to the expected consequences. Table 7 presents the final formulation of the study's paradigmatic model.

**Table 7**

*Final Formulation of the Paradigmatic Model of Talent Management Capabilities for Enhancing Organizational Agility*

| Element of the Paradigmatic Model | Main Categories                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Causal conditions                 | Positive organizational structure; effective communication; participative management; behavioral characteristics; human resource management system; sound administrative processes                                                  |
| Core phenomenon                   | Agility-based talent management capabilities at the individual, group, organizational, and social levels                                                                                                                            |
| Contextual conditions             | Self-assessment; positive organizational climate; collaborative learning                                                                                                                                                            |
| Intervening conditions            | Ineffective management; political pressure                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Strategies                        | Benchmarking and localizing the experiences of leading organizations; recruiting and deploying committed and skilled human resources; training and promoting successful behavioral models                                           |
| Consequences                      | Strengthening ethical dignity; enhancing individual effectiveness and efficiency; improving organizational performance; increasing organizational trust; promoting a healthy-society perspective; achieving sustainable development |

Table 7 shows that the study's paradigmatic model consists of six interrelated and complementary elements. In this model, the causal conditions—positive organizational structure, effective communication, participative management, behavioral characteristics, the human resource management system, and sound administrative processes—serve as the primary drivers of the core phenomenon. The core phenomenon is conceptualized as agility-based talent management capabilities at four levels: individual, group, organizational, and social. The contextual conditions—self-assessment, a positive organizational climate, and collaborative learning—provide a facilitating environment for selecting and implementing the strategies. In contrast, the intervening conditions—ineffective management and political pressure—may influence how the strategies are selected and implemented and how effective they ultimately become. The resulting strategies comprise benchmarking and localizing the experiences of leading organizations, recruiting and deploying committed and skilled human resources, and

training and promoting successful behavioral models. Effective implementation of these strategies leads to consequences such as strengthening ethical dignity, enhancing individual effectiveness and efficiency, improving organizational performance, increasing organizational trust, promoting a healthy-society perspective, and achieving sustainable development.

Based on the relationships depicted in the paradigmatic model, its principal pathway can be formulated as follows:

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual and Paradigmatic Model of Talent Management Capabilities for Enhancing Organizational Agility in Tehran Municipality*



Figure 1 shows that the causal conditions constitute the starting point of the process through which the agility-based talent management capability model is formed and that they lead directly to the core phenomenon. The direction of the arrow from the causal conditions toward the core phenomenon indicates that a positive organizational structure, effective communication, participative management, attention to employees' behavioral characteristics, the establishment of an appropriate human resource management system, and the reform of administrative processes provide the foundation for developing agility-based talent management capabilities. Therefore, the causal conditions function as initiating factors and drivers that create the capacities required for establishing the core phenomenon in Tehran Municipality.

The core phenomenon is located at the center of the figure and represents agility-based talent management capabilities at the individual, group, organizational, and social levels. The positioning of these four levels around the central core illustrates the multilevel, systemic, and interconnected nature of these capabilities. The individual level focuses on employees' characteristics and capacities; the group level concerns the effectiveness of team interactions and activities; the organizational level emphasizes social and psychological capital, organizational virtues, and work conscience; and the social

level reflects the organization's social participation and altruistic orientation. This structure indicates that achieving organizational agility requires the coordinated development of capabilities at all levels. Focusing exclusively on identifying and developing individual talent, without considering group, organizational, and social contexts, cannot produce sustainable agility.

The arrow from the core phenomenon toward the strategies indicates that agility-based talent management capabilities provide the basis for selecting and formulating the organization's executive actions. In other words, once the required capabilities have been identified and developed at different levels, they must be translated into action through a set of specific and targeted strategies. These strategies include benchmarking and localizing the experiences of leading organizations, recruiting and deploying committed and skilled human resources, and training and promoting successful behavioral models. They therefore constitute the link between the potential capacities of talent management and tangible organizational outcomes.

In Figure 1, the contextual conditions are positioned at the top of the model, while the intervening conditions appear at the bottom; the arrows from both categories are directly connected to the strategies. This configuration indicates that contextual and intervening conditions influence the selection, implementation, and effectiveness of the strategies rather than directly producing the core phenomenon. The contextual conditions—self-assessment, a positive organizational climate, and collaborative learning—provide a supportive and facilitating environment for strategy implementation. Self-assessment assists in identifying employees' capacities and developmental needs; a positive organizational climate increases openness to change and employee participation; and collaborative learning facilitates experience sharing and the development of collective knowledge. Strengthening these conditions can improve the quality of strategy implementation and increase the likelihood of achieving the desired consequences.

In contrast, the intervening conditions—ineffective management and political pressure—are constraining factors that may hinder the implementation of the strategies or reduce their effectiveness. Ineffective management may lead to inadequate planning, disregard for employee participation, and the absence of a succession-planning system. Political pressure may also undermine professional and merit-based criteria and divert decisions regarding recruitment, appointment, and human resource development from their intended course. Therefore, the successful implementation of talent management strategies requires strengthening favorable contextual conditions and reducing, controlling, or neutralizing the inhibiting effects of the intervening conditions.

The direction of the arrow from the strategies toward the consequences indicates that achieving the model's desired outcomes depends on the quality and effectiveness of the proposed strategies' implementation. The coherent implementation of these strategies can strengthen ethical dignity and enhance individual effectiveness and efficiency at the behavioral level. At the organizational level, improved performance, increased organizational trust, the promotion of a healthy-society perspective, and the achievement of sustainable development are among the most important expected outcomes. Therefore, the model's consequences do not emerge automatically or merely through identifying talent. Achieving them requires translating talent management capabilities into coherent, targeted executive actions aligned with the specific circumstances of Tehran Municipality.

Overall, Figure 1 represents a coherent and directional process that begins with the establishment of the causal conditions, leads to the emergence of multilevel agility-based talent management capabilities, is operationalized through appropriate

strategies, and ultimately produces desirable individual, organizational, and social consequences. Within this process, contextual conditions influence the selection and implementation of strategies by providing a supportive environment, whereas intervening conditions affect them by creating constraints or disruptions. Accordingly, enhancing organizational agility in Tehran Municipality requires coordination between structural and human factors, the development of talent management capabilities at all four levels, the strengthening of supportive conditions, the reduction of managerial and environmental barriers, and the coherent implementation of talent management strategies.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The present study developed a grounded theory model of talent management capabilities for enhancing organizational agility in Tehran Municipality. The findings showed that the proposed model comprises six interconnected elements: causal conditions, the core phenomenon, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, strategies, and consequences. The causal conditions included a positive organizational structure, effective communication, participative management, behavioral characteristics, an appropriate human resource management system, and sound administrative processes. The core phenomenon was conceptualized as agility-based talent management capabilities operating at the individual, group, organizational, and social levels. Self-assessment, a positive organizational climate, and collaborative learning emerged as contextual conditions, whereas ineffective management and political pressure were identified as intervening conditions. The principal strategies consisted of benchmarking and localizing successful experiences, recruiting and deploying committed and competent personnel, and training employees while promoting successful behavioral models. Finally, the consequences included strengthening ethical dignity, enhancing individual effectiveness and efficiency, improving organizational performance, increasing organizational trust, promoting a healthy-society perspective, and contributing to sustainable development. Collectively, these findings indicate that talent management should be understood as a dynamic, multilevel organizational capability rather than as a collection of independent human resource practices.

One of the major findings was that structural, communicative, participative, behavioral, human resource, and administrative conditions form the foundation upon which agility-oriented talent management capabilities can develop. In particular, decentralization, transparent information flows, employee participation, meritocracy, flexibility in personnel deployment, and technology-oriented administrative practices emerged as important prerequisites. This finding is consistent with the dynamic talent management capability perspective proposed by Harsch and Festing, according to which organizations become more agile when they develop talent systems capable of sensing changes, responding to evolving human capital requirements, and reconfiguring talent-related resources [6, 7]. It is also compatible with the strategic talent management literature emphasizing that organizations must move beyond fragmented HR activities and establish coordinated systems in which talent decisions are connected to organizational priorities [2]. Accordingly, the present findings suggest that organizational agility cannot be achieved merely by recruiting talented employees; the surrounding structural and managerial architecture must allow those employees to contribute, communicate, move across roles, and participate effectively in decision-making.

The importance of flexible personnel deployment and merit-based human resource systems also corresponds closely with the skills-matching approach to talent management. Jooss and colleagues emphasized that strategic agility can be strengthened when organizations identify employees according to their competencies and dynamically match available skills

to emerging organizational requirements rather than relying solely on static job structures [4, 5]. From this perspective, the present finding concerning flexibility in deploying organizational personnel can be interpreted as an operational mechanism through which talent management contributes to agility. In a municipality characterized by heterogeneous activities and rapidly changing urban demands, the ability to identify relevant expertise and redirect it toward emerging priorities can shorten response times and improve organizational adaptability. Such a system also requires reliable information about employees' skills, developmental potential, and performance, reinforcing the study's emphasis on transparent communication and sound administrative processes.

The study further demonstrated that agility-based talent management capabilities are inherently multilevel. At the individual level, respect, hopefulness, responsibility, achievement, and sportsmanship were identified; at the group level, team effectiveness was central; at the organizational level, social capital, psychological capital, organizational virtues, and work conscience were emphasized; and at the social level, social participation and altruism emerged. This finding expands talent management beyond the conventional focus on high-performing individuals. It indicates that individual talent becomes strategically valuable only when it is translated into effective teamwork, organizational capital, collective responsibility, and socially responsive behavior. Such an interpretation is consistent with the literature on talent management and learning organizations, which emphasizes that organizational value is created when individual knowledge and capabilities are shared, developed, and embedded within collective organizational processes [3]. It also corresponds with the agile ecosystem perspective, according to which competitiveness and adaptability emerge from the interaction of employees, organizational systems, learning processes, leadership, and strategic talent management rather than from isolated individual excellence [10].

The individual and developmental dimensions of the model can also be interpreted through the concept of learning agility. The results imply that employees must possess not only current competencies but also psychological and behavioral capacities that facilitate development, responsibility, adaptation, and achievement. Milani and colleagues demonstrated that learning agility has become increasingly important in talent management because organizations operating under uncertainty require individuals capable of learning from experience, incorporating feedback, and transferring learning to unfamiliar circumstances [8]. Thus, the individual-level components identified in the present study may function as foundations for adaptive employee behavior. In a municipal context, where employees may face unfamiliar service problems, technological changes, regulatory modifications, or evolving citizen expectations, the ability to learn and adapt may be as important as technical expertise itself.

Another important result concerned contextual conditions. Self-assessment, a positive organizational climate, and collaborative learning were identified as facilitating conditions for the successful implementation of agility-based talent management strategies. Self-assessment enables employees to recognize their strengths, weaknesses, developmental needs, and potential contributions. A positive organizational climate creates psychological readiness for participation and change, while collaborative learning facilitates knowledge exchange, collective problem-solving, and shared interpretation of emerging challenges. These findings are consistent with the view that learning organizations create environments in which talent development is continuous rather than episodic [3]. They also correspond with evidence emphasizing the role of learning agility in developing adaptive talent pools [8]. Furthermore, an agile management ecosystem depends on collaborative interaction, knowledge circulation, and organizational conditions that allow individuals to learn and respond

collectively [10]. Therefore, the present findings imply that formal talent management practices may have limited effectiveness unless the organization simultaneously creates a supportive learning environment.

The importance of collaborative learning is particularly relevant under conditions of digital transformation. The study identified technology-based administrative practices as part of the causal conditions, indicating that agility-oriented talent management is increasingly intertwined with technological change. Digitalization alters skill requirements, communication processes, decision-making systems, and organizational structures and consequently creates new pressures for rapid employee learning and competency renewal. Weingarth and colleagues showed that digitally enabled transformation requires organizations to rethink not only technologies but also capabilities, structures, and workforce practices [1]. Similarly, Gouda and Tiwari identified multiple barriers to talent agility in Industry 4.0 environments, demonstrating that technological transformation can be constrained when organizations lack suitable competencies, leadership mechanisms, and adaptive talent systems [9]. The present results therefore suggest that technology adoption in municipal administration should be accompanied by employee development, collaborative learning, and flexible talent deployment if digitalization is to translate into organizational agility.

In contrast to the facilitating contextual conditions, ineffective management and political pressure emerged as intervening conditions that could obstruct the operation of the model. Ineffective management included inadequate planning, disregard for employees' views, and the absence of succession planning, whereas political pressure involved the dominance of political and group affiliations over human resource processes, negative publicity, and managerial conservatism. These findings are particularly significant because they show that talent management is embedded within organizational governance arrangements. Even well-designed recruitment, training, or development systems may fail when appointments and personnel decisions are insufficiently merit-based or when managerial processes are inconsistent. This interpretation aligns closely with the good-governance-driven talent management model proposed by Sakvand and colleagues, which emphasizes the importance of contextual, strategic, and intervening factors in shaping the effectiveness of talent management and organizational efficiency [18]. It is also compatible with recent analyses of public-sector talent management that highlight bureaucratic constraints, governance challenges, managerial limitations, and institutional pressures as major barriers to strategic human resource development [17].

The absence of succession planning identified under ineffective management deserves particular attention. Succession planning ensures that strategically important positions can be filled by individuals whose capabilities have already been identified and developed. Without such mechanisms, organizations may experience discontinuity, knowledge loss, arbitrary appointments, and dependence on reactive recruitment. Musale emphasized that succession planning is essential for talent retention and the systematic development of future organizational leaders [15]. Similarly, Ahi and colleagues presented talent management as closely connected with succession development and emphasized the integration of identification, development, and preparation of talent for future responsibilities [16]. Accordingly, the present finding suggests that succession planning should not be treated as a peripheral administrative practice in Tehran Municipality. Rather, it constitutes an important mechanism for maintaining leadership continuity and preserving organizational agility in situations involving managerial turnover or changing strategic requirements.

Three principal strategies were identified: benchmarking and localizing leading organizational experiences, recruiting and deploying committed and skilled human resources, and training employees while promoting successful behavioral models.

These strategies reveal that the development of agility cannot rely on a single HR intervention. Benchmarking provides access to tested practices, but localization is necessary because organizational structures, governance systems, workforce characteristics, and public-sector obligations differ across contexts. This finding corresponds with Aljbour and colleagues' observation that organizations understand and implement talent management in different ways depending on their institutional circumstances, organizational priorities, and interpretations of talent [14]. Therefore, simply importing private-sector or international talent models may not produce equivalent outcomes in Tehran Municipality. Effective adaptation requires assessment of local regulations, administrative traditions, political influences, organizational culture, and the municipality's public-service mission.

The strategies of recruiting, selecting, and deploying competent personnel and continuously developing employees also align with the broader strategic talent management literature. Akbar and colleagues emphasized that contemporary talent management incorporates multiple interconnected processes involving attraction, development, retention, deployment, and strategic workforce planning [2]. Sohrabi and colleagues similarly connected talent management with human resource agility and emphasized that organizations require flexible talent systems capable of enhancing responsiveness and adaptive capacity [11]. The current study extends these perspectives by showing how these activities may operate within a municipal organization and by situating them within a broader configuration of causal, contextual, and intervening conditions. In other words, recruiting talented people is necessary but insufficient; employees must be appropriately deployed, continually developed, and supported by structures that allow their capabilities to produce organizational responsiveness.

The consequences identified in the model further demonstrate that agility-based talent management can generate effects extending beyond conventional HR outcomes. At the behavioral level, participants identified increased ethical dignity and individual effectiveness and efficiency. At the organizational level, improved performance, enhanced trust, a healthy-society orientation, and sustainable development were emphasized. These outcomes are consistent with research showing that effective talent management can contribute to sustainable competitive advantage by developing valuable human capabilities and aligning them with long-term organizational objectives [12]. Similarly, Al-Kharabsheh found that talent management contributes to competitive advantage and that organizational ambidexterity can strengthen this relationship [13]. Although a municipality does not pursue competitive advantage in precisely the same sense as a private firm, analogous benefits may be reflected in superior service quality, efficient resource utilization, responsiveness, organizational legitimacy, and sustainable public value.

Overall, the findings suggest that talent management capabilities enhance organizational agility through an integrated process rather than through a direct or isolated effect. Structural reform, communication, participation, meritocracy, and sound administrative systems create the conditions for agility-oriented talent capabilities to emerge; individual capabilities must then be transformed into group, organizational, and social capacities; supportive conditions such as self-assessment, collaborative learning, and a positive climate facilitate implementation; and managerial weakness and political pressures may inhibit the process. Appropriate strategies subsequently translate these capabilities into individual, organizational, and social outcomes. This systemic interpretation is compatible with dynamic talent management theory [6, 7], the skills-matching perspective on strategic agility [4, 5], agile management ecosystems [10], and contemporary strategic talent management approaches [2]. The contribution of the present model lies in integrating these general principles within a localized public-

sector setting and demonstrating that talent management in Tehran Municipality must become strategic, dynamic, learning-oriented, merit-based, and responsive to both organizational and societal requirements.

The present study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, because the study employed a qualitative grounded theory design and was conducted within Tehran Municipality, the resulting model is context-specific and should not be assumed to have statistical generalizability to other municipalities, public institutions, or private organizations. Second, the study was based on interviews with 11 managers, deputy managers, and experts; although data collection continued until theoretical saturation, a broader range of participants, including operational employees and other organizational stakeholders, might have introduced additional perspectives. Third, some of the issues discussed during the interviews, particularly political pressures, managerial inefficiency, appointment processes, and meritocracy, were organizationally sensitive and may have influenced participants' willingness to express their views fully. Fourth, the findings reflect the organizational, managerial, and environmental conditions prevailing during the period of data collection, and changes in policies, leadership, technology, or administrative regulations may affect the continuing applicability of particular categories. Finally, because the model was derived qualitatively, the magnitude and statistical significance of relationships among its components were not empirically tested.

Future studies should quantitatively validate the proposed model using larger samples of employees and managers and apply confirmatory factor analysis or structural equation modeling to examine the relationships among causal conditions, agility-based talent management capabilities, contextual and intervening conditions, strategies, and consequences. Comparative studies across municipalities of different sizes and regions would help determine which components are transferable and which are context-dependent. Researchers could also compare the model across public, semi-public, and private organizations to identify sector-specific differences in talent management and organizational agility. Longitudinal research would be particularly useful for determining whether changes in talent management capabilities predict subsequent improvements in agility, organizational performance, and service responsiveness. Future studies may also investigate the mediating or moderating roles of organizational learning, psychological capital, digital transformation, organizational trust, leadership style, innovation capacity, employee engagement, and organizational culture. Including operational employees, citizens, human resource professionals, and senior decision-makers in subsequent qualitative studies may further enrich the model and clarify how talent-management practices are perceived at different organizational levels.

Tehran Municipality should establish an integrated talent management system connecting recruitment, competency assessment, development, deployment, performance management, career progression, and succession planning. Recruitment and appointment decisions should be based on transparent competency and merit criteria, while mechanisms should be introduced to reduce the influence of nonprofessional considerations on human resource decisions. Managers should create up-to-date competency profiles and talent inventories to facilitate the rapid deployment of employees according to changing organizational needs. Greater decentralization, employee participation, transparent communication, and access to organizational information should be encouraged to accelerate decision-making and strengthen responsiveness. Continuous professional development programs should emphasize adaptive skills, collaborative problem-solving, digital competencies, leadership development, and learning from experience. Formal succession plans should be established for managerial and strategically critical positions. The municipality should also institutionalize self-assessment, knowledge-sharing meetings, interdisciplinary teams, brainstorming sessions, and peer learning to strengthen collaborative

learning. Finally, successful talent management practices from leading organizations should be systematically benchmarked but adapted to the municipality's administrative structure, legal requirements, workforce characteristics, public-service mission, and specific urban challenges rather than being implemented through direct imitation.

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### Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

### Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

### Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Written consent was obtained from all participants in the study.

### Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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